Analysis of Students' Ability in Reading Aloud at Grade VIII-A of UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli

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Abstract. Reading aloud is an important basic skill in English language learning. However, students in class VIII-A UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli are facing difficulties in reading aloud, such as incorrect pronunciation, monotonous intonation, low voice volume, and lack of expression. This study aims to analyze students' ability to read aloud and the factors that influence it. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with 32 students as subjects. Data were collected through observation, reading aloud tests, interviews, and documentation. The assessment was based on four aspects: pronunciation and clarity, fluency, volume, and intonation with expression. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model. The results showed that most students were in the low and very low categories, and there were no students who reached the excellent category. Errors most often occurred in pronunciation and intonation, which indicates limited vocabulary mastery and weak phonological awareness. Internal factors such as lack of confidence, low motivation, and limited vocabulary were found to hinder performance. External factors, including an unsupportive learning environment and minimal practice opportunities, also contributed to students' difficulties. In conclusion, students' ability to read aloud still needs significant improvement through regular practice, vocabulary enrichment, and teacher support in creating a conducive and engaging classroom atmosphere. This research is expected to provide input for teachers in designing reading activities that emphasize pronunciation, fluency, and expression to help students build confidence and improve overall English proficiency.

Keywords: Reading Aloud, Students' Reading Ability, Internal Factors, External Factors, Intonation.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is a subject taught in Indonesian schools. For high school students, English is a necessary subject taught to increase students" knowledge, capacity to communicate in English, and a favorable attitude toward the language. There are four abilities required when learning English. The four skills encompass both receptive and producing abilities. Speaking and writing are productive abilities, whereas listening and reading are receptive ones (Mauliska & D'Angelo, 2024).

Reading is a component of language skills that requires interaction with written text in order to acquire meaning and obtain information from it. To understand the meaning of the text, students must be able to analyze and interpret the text in such a way that it is easy to understand the text itself (Rochman, 2018). Students should also be aware of the goals of the writers' points of view in order to understand the text. Basic reading skills include the capacity

to absorb text, recognize letters, and learn rudimentary vocabulary, which serve as the foundation for more advanced reading abilities. Basic reading skill mastery has a significant impact on pupils' achievement in all areas of learning, both at school and in everyday life (Amir, 2020).

According to research conducted by the (Sun et al., 2021), good reading skills are a significant predictor of academic success. Students with great basic reading abilities are better able to follow instruction and have more confidence in participating in academic activities. The results show that strong basic reading skills serve as a significant predictor of academic achievement, and students with better reading skills have higher achievement in various subjects.

Reading abilities can be classified into two types: silent reading and reading aloud (Mendoza & Cruz, 2024). Silent reading is the technique of reading a text without making a sound, allowing people to better comprehend and reflect on the material. This strategy is extremely effective for enhancing. Reading speed and analytical skills, as well as assisting readers in focusing on the content of the text without interruptions. Reading aloud, on the other hand, requires you to say the words out. This activity is useful for honing pronunciation and intonation, developing listening skills, and strengthening comprehension through social engagement.

Students' reading aloud criteria should contain numerous crucial characteristics that contribute to reading aloud effectiveness. First, clear pronunciation is the most important criterion, as students must grasp and accurately pronounce words so that listeners can follow the text (Wahyuni, 2022). Furthermore, intonation and expression are critical, since utilizing the correct tone of voice can help convey the emotion and meaning of the material being read (Rezkia et al., 2021). Then, a reading speed that is neither too fast nor too slow will help listeners understand the reading content. And the last, another crucial factor is the capacity to grab and hold the listener's attention, which requires students to communicate with the audience and make their reading entertaining. Students who meet these characteristics can dramatically enhance their reading aloud skills.

Several studies demonstrate students who master all of the abilities of reading aloud are better at comprehending what they read. The study of (Wahyuni, 2022), found that pupils who can read with accurate intonation and good pronunciation are not only easier to understand by listeners, but also better able to capture the meaning and nuances of the text. Furthermore, (Santhi, 2022) discovered that effective reading aloud skills improve student engagement, which adds to a deeper knowledge of the subject.

It means that the ability to read aloud is needed to improve students' ability to read, but in reality, when researchers made initial observations, there were still many students who are lacking in reading, especially reading aloud. Many students in grade 8 feel awkward or unconfident when asked to read aloud in front of the class. students feel that fear of judgment from classmates or teachers can inhibit their participation, thus reducing the opportunity to practice. Students often have difficulty in pronouncing words correctly. This can be caused by a lack of understanding of phonetics or vocabulary that has not been mastered, so their pronunciation sounds unclear or incorrect. And also some students show low interest in reading, which has an impact on their reading aloud ability. When students are not used to reading, they tend to struggle when asked to read aloud, due to a lack of familiarity with the text. Many students who have limited vocabulary will face difficulties when reading aloud. They may stumble or hesitate when they encounter new words, which can disrupt the flow and clarity of the reading. Therefore, researchers are motivated to raise this research title is : *"Analysis of Students' Ability in Reading Aloud at Grade VIII-A of UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli"*

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is a complicated activity that involves more than just word recognition. It entails engaging with the text in order to derive meaning, link with existing information, and interpret the author‟s goal (Sofyan et al., 2021). To properly comprehend a text, students must master the phases of reading, which include pre-reading, comprehension, analysis, and interpretation (Ali, 2022). According to (Balan et al., 2019), reading comprehension is essential for academic success across various subjects. Strong reading skills, particularly in early education, significantly impact students' ability to understand content, think critically, and participate confidently in academic activities. Students with proficient reading abilities are better equipped to engage in collaborative learning and overcome academic challenges, especially in high school level (Maslina et al., 2020).

Based on (Cárdenas Sánchez et al., 2022), reading aloud is an effective instructional practice that improve students' reading abilities, comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence. It promotes a provide opportunities for feedback, all of which contribute to improved cognitive reading abilities. Reading aloud allows students to obtain a deeper grasp of texts while also developing critical abilities for analysis and interpretation, which contributes to their general academic improvement. There are 5 components of reading aloud (Sandy & Muliawanti, 2020), namely, The first aspect of selecting texts for reading aloud is to consider

the needs and interests of the students and their different backgrounds. And also consider text selection based on the teaching and learning objectives to teach each different genre. It is important for teachers to practice and review the text repeatedly before class to understand and appreciate the text. Goal setting is related to the aspects to be achieved in reading activities. There is a goal of reading activities that only focuses on achieving outcomes will reduce student involvement. Another important aspect to consider in applying reading aloud is animation and expression. Practice animation and expression by changing their voice, using a variety of movements, body language and gesture.

The process allows students to make connections between new information and prior knowledge, aiding in comprehension and critical thinking. Additionally, it promotes listening skills, literacy development, and communicative abilities. (Senawati et al., 2021) said that, by engaging students in reading aloud sessions, teachers provide opportunities for active participation, stimulate motivation, and encourage critical reflection, all of which contribute to a more comprehensive and effective learning experience. Refer to (Sujariati, 2024), there are two factors that influenced the students' reading aloud, such as internal factors including fear of making errors, lack of self-confident and high expectations. In some situations, students are afraid that they will make mistakes in pronunciation errors when reading aloud in front of peers. When reading in front of peers, anxiety will be triggered unconsciously. Meanwhile, external factors including unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, and unfamiliar culture are factors that cause students to read aloud less. Based on (Ekaningsih, 2022) there is a rubric is used to assessing the students ability in reading aloud. The rubric's evaluation statement, students can improve their reading skills by being evaluated on their entire reading experience and understanding the results. There are four aspects such as pronunciation and clarity, fluency, volume, and intonation with expression, along with four ratings: excellent, good, fair, and poor.

(Panjaitan et al., 2023) entitled "The Effect of Reading Aloud on the Students' Ability in Reading Comprehension" The results showed that the reading aloud strategy had a positive impact in improving students' understanding of texts, especially narrative texts. (Safitri, 2024) entitled "An Analysis of Students Reading Comprehension on Students Reading Aloud Activities at the XI Grade of MAN 1 Solok Selatan" The results showed that students' reading comprehension was in the medium category. The findings also showed that when reading aloud, students seemed less confident, confused, and still faced difficulties in understanding the content of the text.

The difference in the research conducted by the researcher is the focus of the research. This study assessed students' technical skills in reading aloud, such as pronunciation,

intonation, fluency, and expression. Meanwhile, Panjaitan et al. (2023) and Safitri (2024) emphasized on reading comprehension. The research conducted by the researcher has some similarities with the previous studies; all of studies discuss the importance of reading aloud activities in English language learning. All studies show that reading aloud can improve students' reading skills, both in terms of pronunciation, intonation, reading fluency, and confidence. They also highlighted the influence of internal and external factors on students' success in reading aloud.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research techniques can be identified as scientific methods used to acquire data for specific purposes and applications. According to (Huberman & Miles, 2014), discuss qualitative research as a process of systematically examining and interpreting non-numerical data. They focus on the importance of making sense of complex and often subjective human experiences through careful organization and analysis of qualitative data such as interviews, observations, and texts. Qualitative research is defined as a strategy for investigating and comprehending the meanings that individuals or groups assign to a social or human situation. It is a strategy that aims to get a thorough grasp of people's lived experiences as well as their perceptions and interpretations of their surroundings. This form of research focuses on making sense of a phenomenon or topic through the perspective of the participants, emphasizing their thoughts, feelings, and personal insights (Creswell, 2018).

Respondents

The data comes from the result of observation and interviews the 32 students at grade VIII-A of UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli as informants or respondent who are the main sources of information in this research

Instruments

According to (Sugiyono, 2022), a research instrument is a tool or device used by researchers to measure and evaluate phenomena that occur, both natural and social, which are the objects or subjects observed in a study. Based on the research focus, the researcher will be using three types of collecting data instruments: observation is a research method where the researcher systematically observed when the students doing reading aloud. After that, the researcher will be asses the students" ability in reading aloud with rubric with aspects to be assessed, which are pronunciation and clarity, fluency, volume, intonation, and expression. The

interview was conducted with students whose scores fell into the "Low" and "Very Low" categories, in order to explore their difficulties and the underlying factors influencing their performance. The last of instrument used is documentation from videos that capture students reading individually across the entire class

Procedures

Observations were collected through tests given to students to read a text from the English for Nusantara Grade VIII textbook, page 274. After that, an assessment was carried out using a rubric (Ekaningsih, 2022). From the results of the reading aloud assessment, the scores obtained by the students could be determined. Students in the low and very low categories were interviewed to find out what factors influenced their reading aloud ability.

Data analysis

In this research the data was analyzed used two techniques are as follows:

Analyzing the quantitative data took from the test that researcher gave to the students, the researcher evaluated it related scoring rubric of reading aloud and calculated by using the formula: $TP = \frac{FB}{N} \times 100$

Which:

TP = Value

FB = Obtained

N = Maximum score

To get the level of student"s ability in reading aloud the researcher classify the student"s level of reading aloud as follow:

Table 1. Classifications of student"s ability in reading aloud.

| Scores	Categories
86-100 %	Very High
76-85 %	High
60-75 %	Medium
55-59 %	Low
0-54 %	Very Low

Analyzing the qualitative data took form, data condensation refers to the process of selecting and simplifying, the data that appear of observation, interviews data. After that, data display with diagram to easily understand the information. And the last, making conclusion drawing or verification.

4.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' Ability in Reading Aloud

To find out the student's ability in reading aloud, the researchers have conducted through observation sheets during reading aloud session involving 32 eight-grade students at class VIII-A as respondents. The following the findings from the research: The students were assessed using a rubric that included four aspects: pronunciation and clarity, fluency, volume, and intonation & expression. Each aspect was scored from 2 to 5, with maximum total score of 20. Below is the summarized data.

Pronunciation and clarity
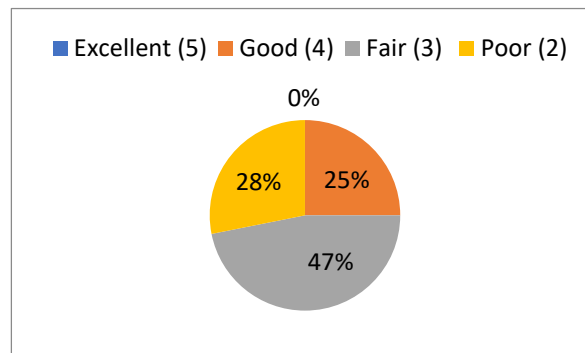
Figure 1. Result of pronunciation and clarity from reading aloud rubric.

The data showed that no students (0%) achieved an excellent pronunciation level. Eight students (25%) were in the good category, pronouncing most words correctly with only 1–2 errors. Fifteen students (47%) were in the fair category, making 3–4 mispronunciations, while nine students (28%) were in the poor category, with more than five errors and unclear pronunciation. Common difficulties involved words with silent letters or irregular vowel patterns, such as "watched" (/wɑːtʃt/), "tired" (/ˈtaɪərd/), "disaster" (/dɪˈzæstər/), "practiced" (/ˈpræk.tɪst/), and "couldn't" (/ˈkʊdənt/), which were frequently mispronounced.

Fluency
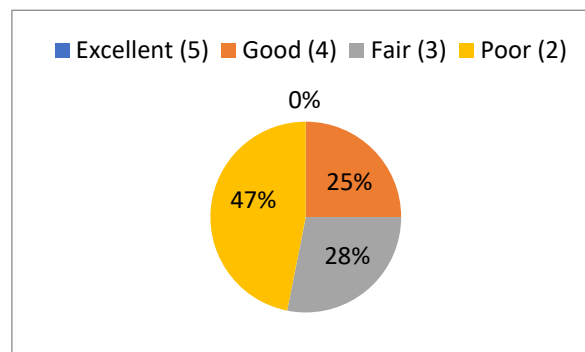
Figure 2. Result of fluency from reading aloud rubric.

The data reveals that no students (0%) reached the excellent level, which requires consistent appropriate speed, fluency, and clear punctuation pauses. Eight students (25%) achieved a good level, reading at an appropriate pace with occasional hesitations and 2–4 errors. Nine students (28%) were at the fair level, showing some pacing issues, frequent pauses, and 4–6 errors. Fifteen students (47%) fell into the poor level, struggling to maintain pace, lacking punctuation pauses, and making over six errors.

Volume
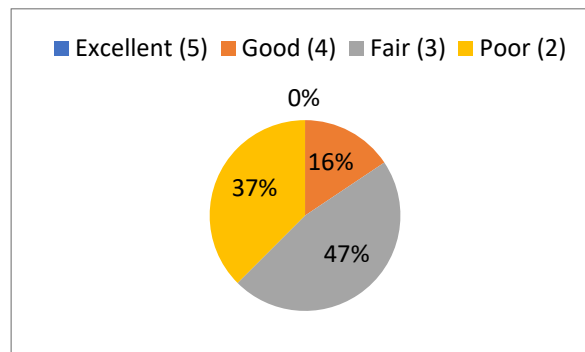
Figure 3. Result of volume from reading aloud rubric.

The data shows that no students (0%) achieved the excellent level, which requires a consistently clear and audible voice with no volume fluctuations. Five students (16%) were at the good level, maintaining clear audibility with only 1–2 fluctuations. Fifteen students (47%) were in the fair level, with generally clear volume but occasional inaudible words or sentences, leading to 2–4 errors. Twelve students (37%) fell into the poor level, reading with low volume and many inaudible parts, resulting in more than five errors.

Intonation with expression
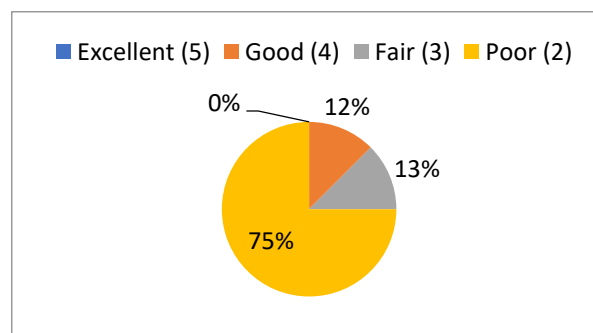
Figure 4. Result of intonation with expression from reading aloud rubric.

The data indicates that no students (0%) reached the excellent level, which requires a natural, appropriate tone without exaggeration or monotony. Four students (12%) were at the good level, maintaining an adequate tone most of the time. Another four students (13%) were

in the fair level, using an adequate tone occasionally but often sounding monotonous. The majority, 24 students (75%), were in the poor level, rarely using an adequate tone and frequently reading in a monotonous manner.

Based on students' performance scores in reading aloud, it can be seen that the data shows that most students (63%) have "Very Low" reading aloud ability. This shows that the total reading aloud ability of grade eight students is still quite low. Most students have difficulty in pronunciation, projecting their voices correctly, using the right tone and expression, and reading with confidence. This can be seen from the percentage diagram below

Factors that influenced Students' Reading Aloud
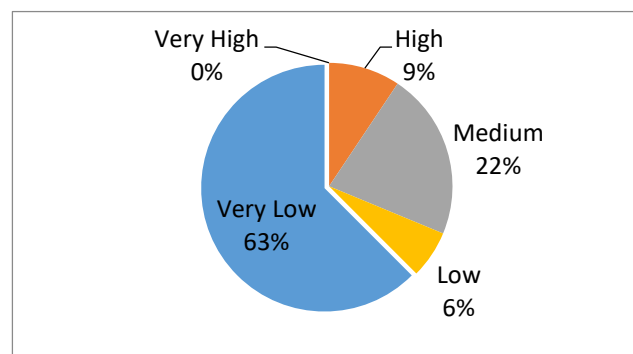
Figure 5. Result factors that influence students' ability to reading aloud.

To find out the factors that influence students' ability to reading aloud, researchers collected data by interviewing students. For more depth, researchers interviewed students in the "low" and "very low" categories totaling 22 people. From the results of these interviews, researchers will describe the factors that influence students' ability to read aloud.

Based on the answers given by the students, it can be concluded that there are various factors that affect their English reading aloud ability. These factors can generally be classified into two main categories, namely internal factors and external factors.

Internal Factors include aspects that come from within the students, such as lack of interest in English lessons, low self- confidence, nervousness when performing in front of the class, ignorance of the meaning of the text, and limited mastery of vocabulary and expression techniques. In addition, lack of reading habits and excessive focus on the text are also included in the internal factors that affect pronunciation, fluency, volume, and intonation and expression when reading aloud.

External Factors include things that come from outside students, such as non-conducive learning environment conditions, distractions from friends in class, and the implementation of

reading activities carried out suddenly without sufficient preparation. These factors contribute to students' difficulties in performing optimal read-aloud performance.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion in the previous chapters, this study concludes that the students" ability in reading aloud is still relatively low. Most of the students are categorized in the poor level, with only a few reaching the fair or good level. This evaluation is based on several components of reading aloud, including pronunciation, fluency, volume, intonation, and expression. Among these, pronunciation and intonation were the most challenging aspects for the students, while volume was generally not a significant problem.

The findings also show that several internal and external factors influenced students" performance in reading aloud. Internal factors include phonological awareness, vocabulary knowledge, motivation, and confidence. Students who lacked vocabulary and confidence were more likely to struggle with pronunciation and expression. External factors include intonation and expression skills, unfamiliar text or vocabulary, and the learning environment. Students with less exposure to reading aloud or a lack of teacher support tended to perform poorly.

This research supports existing theories that emphasize reading aloud as a complex skill involving not only reading accuracy but also fluency, comprehension, and performance elements. It also confirms that affective factors like anxiety and motivation, as well as instructional practices, significantly impact students" success in reading aloud activities.

It is recommended that teachers provide structured reading aloud practice with an emphasis on pronunciation and intonation, while fostering a supportive and non-judgmental environment to build students' confidence. Students are encouraged to practice regularly inside and outside the classroom, enrich their vocabulary, and improve pronunciation through various resources, while also being confident in making mistakes as part of learning. Future researchers may further investigate the effects of instructional interventions, larger sample sizes, and different educational levels to obtain broader insights. At the same time, schools should support reading programs by providing access to English books, audio materials, and trained teachers to enhance students' interest and ability in reading aloud.

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